

**Statement**  
**of**  
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**before**

**U.S. Senate**  
**Committee on the Environment**  
**and Public Works**

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## Introduction

Good morning Chairman Inhofe and Senator Jeffords. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Committee to discuss important preparedness initiatives within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Our nation's emergency and public safety services are quite simply the finest in the world. They safeguard our institutions, communities, and critical infrastructure around the clock, and respond heroically when we face sudden challenges from the forces of nature or assaults by the action of man. Yet without a consistent, logical and sustainable way to prepare for 21st century homeland security challenges, unity of effort and operational readiness have proven to be elusive. Our homeland security enterprise has truly extraordinary capacity, but it suffers from a prevailing tendency to prepare in isolation – as if each community, state, or Federal department is ‘playing its own ballgame.’ Unsystematic and insufficiently collaborative activities have exacted a severe penalty in uneven performance and repeated and costly operational miscues – often at the expense of the most socially vulnerable segments of society. Today's culture of preparedness requires reexamining our understanding of risk, consequences and vulnerability, what it means to be prepared, and how we collaborate across a large, divided, decentralized and highly diversified enterprise.

The nation needs a dedicated and sustained national effort to organize, guide investments in, and strengthen national preparedness. Preparedness is both a *process* and an *effect*. As a *process* it provides intergovernmental, nongovernmental and private sector partners with the opportunity to collaborate on specific patterns of preparatory actions that

contribute to our collective operational readiness. As an *effect* it contributes to risk reduction through mitigation and to operational effectiveness by planning, training, equipping, exercising and evaluating our ability to prevent, protect from, respond to or recover from threatened or actual terrorist attacks, major disasters or other emergencies.

Americans are by nature problem solvers. We rarely pause to look back and see how much we have accomplished. Homeland security preparedness is a good example. Not long ago it was uncommon for professionals from multiple disciplines in the same community to sit down to jointly plan or to participate in an exercise. *No more.* We are ‘resetting our habit switches.’ In a few short years we have trained, equipped and exercised hundreds of thousands of front line responders and made concerted efforts to improve planning and explore new means of collaboration. *We are turning a corner as a prepared nation.*

Yet while much has been accomplished, we can never be “good enough.” We know from painful experience there are systemic infirmities in our preparedness. We fully understand that preparedness is a quest – not a guarantee. Even the most ready community cannot fully anticipate surprise or novelty. But while preparedness cannot guarantee success, inadequate preparedness is a proven contributor to failure. So we must discard outdated and outmoded thinking that has proven so ill-suited to modern homeland security challenges. Many problems have been the subject of disaster research for decades, but absent dedicated and undivided attention to preparedness, they remained under-emphasized or neglected. Others were unveiled in the shocking immediacy of 9/11

or Hurricane Katrina. They shook our familiar patterns of behavior, and perceptions of risk – profoundly affecting the status quo culture of preparedness.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) leads a national preparedness partnership with our fellow Federal departments and agencies, state, local, and tribal governments, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector. Secretary Chertoff and Under Secretary Foresman have made it clear that reforms are necessary, and will be accomplished through a collaborative national effort. The Second Stage Review and establishment of the Preparedness Directorate are rapidly integrating preparedness programs, activities and services to meet the needs of our most important asset – the homeland security professionals across this great nation – and to build and apply the processes, products and technology necessary to deal with all manner and magnitude of threats and hazards. These efforts are integral to our national resilience and are a key component of the nation’s active, layered defenses.

George Orwell said: “*Life is a race between education and catastrophe*”, which is an apt description for emergency preparedness. We are in a perpetual contest with nature and at war with a determined adversary. History demonstrates that following catastrophic events like the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927, the attack on Pearl Harbor, or at the advent of a generational conflict like the Cold War, the national culture of preparedness acquired a ‘*new set of eyes*.’ Our predecessors adjusted their thinking, reformed their approaches and recalibrated the culture of preparedness. We have been doing the same, through immediate measures in the aftermath of major events as well as by instituting

deliberate and methodical efforts to answer four fundamental questions that are necessary to our national preparedness:

- What types and magnitude of threats and risks do we face?
- What level of performance will we demand from our homeland security capabilities?
- What are the most cost effective means for providing required capabilities with the needed performance levels for the threats and risks we specified?
- What resources are available?

The answers to these questions frame a national risk-balancing, hedging strategy. We must balance two *portfolios of risk*: the forces of nature and the predations of man.

Nature is non-adaptive and morally neutral. Major events are often characterized by seasonality and some degree of warning and even predictability. We have familiarity and experience in our favor. Terrorism engages us in a deadly contest of competitive learning. We face a patient and adaptive predator whose attacks, while less frequent, are characterized by surprise and novelty and are part of a deliberate strategic campaign.

Both nature and terrorists have the potential to inflict catastrophic levels of harm. Each of these portfolios of risk has an inherent degree of *impenetrable uncertainty*. Balancing risk and uncertainty with available resources requires hard choices and prioritization. We are doing that by gaining an ever-increasingly sophisticated understanding of risk, by distributing resources in a manner that provides a hedge against uncertainty (as in the

case of base allocations of grant funds) and by building agile capabilities. We owe our first line responders and citizens no less.

Building truly interchangeable homeland security capabilities takes more than merely embracing a loosely defined concept like “*all hazards*.” We have turned this concept into a systematic planning methodology using a capabilities-based framework to meet the requirements of Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-8, “*National Preparedness*.” HSPD-8 establishes national policies to strengthen the preparedness of the United States to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from threatened or actual domestic terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies. It charged the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the heads of other appropriate Federal departments and agencies and in consultation with State, local, territorial, and tribal governments to develop a *National Preparedness Goal*.

The Goal and its associated tools define capabilities that address the full range of homeland security missions, from prevention through recovery. It adopts an all-hazards and risk-based approach to preparedness. It acknowledges that the nation cannot prepare fully for every possible contingency by building interchangeable capabilities and striking a balance that weighs risks against available resources.

To compensate for uncertainty, the Goal provides a set of National Planning Scenarios representing a range of threats and hazards that warrant national attention. The National Planning Scenarios establish common assumptions to guide nationwide planning

regarding potential vulnerabilities and consequences (or impacts) of major events.

Analysis of the range of potential impacts is essential for defining requirements, both in terms of capacity (how many are needed) and proficiency (how well must they be able to perform). These requirements must be matched to available resources in emergency operations plans (for the near-term) and in preparedness strategies (for the long-term).

Federal, State, local, territorial, and tribal officials supplement this approach with hazard identification and risk assessments that provide additional data on their specific threats and hazards, vulnerabilities and consequences. As a result, officials can tailor the approach to differences in the risk and resource base across the nation.

The Goal defines what it means for the nation to be prepared in terms of a national vision, capabilities, and priorities. It identifies the *destination*; it does not prescribe the road map. It is up to Federal, State, local, territorial, and tribal officials, working collaboratively with the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and individual citizens, to determine how to achieve the Goal. To assist officials in that endeavor, the Goal establishes a Capabilities-Based Planning process supported by three planning tools: the National Planning Scenarios, a Target Capabilities List (TCL), and a Universal Task List (UTL). Target Capabilities (TC) provide a common reference system for intergovernmental, nongovernmental, and private sector preparedness, and the comprehensive task library provides a common language.

Preparedness is ultimately the responsibility of each individual government, consistent with their authorities and available resources. This includes coordinating preparedness

activities among partners operating within their jurisdictional borders, as well as across jurisdictional and geographic borders when dictated by identified hazards and risk assessments. Preparedness should be coordinated using the same multi-agency coordination entities used for operations, as described in the National Incident Management System (NIMS). This is the essence of the concept for implementing the Goal, particularly the national priority to *Expand Regional Collaboration*.

Preparedness is an integral component of the NIMS. NIMS states that individual Federal, State, local, territorial, and tribal governments are responsible for implementing a preparedness cycle in advance of an event and including the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and individual citizens as appropriate. A preparedness cycle requires the following steps:

- Plan,
- Organize and Staff,
- Equip,
- Train,
- Exercise, Evaluate, and Improve.

As I have highlighted, preparedness is not just an administrative function within the Department of Homeland Security. It applies to each office and component within DHS, across the federal interagency community as well as our State, local, territorial, tribal and private sector partners, and to our most critical team members – the American people.



The job of the Preparedness Directorate is to achieve integration and synchronization among all these elements. It is a *shared national mission*, not simply a Federal activity.

### **Preparedness Directorate Mission**

The mission of the Preparedness Directorate is to prepare individuals and public and private sector organizations for disasters through defining and fostering a culture of preparedness, educating stakeholders, strengthening prevention and resilience capabilities and developing the next generation of homeland security professionals.

To achieve a broader and truly *national* preparedness, the Department and our State, local, tribal, and private sector partners must coalesce, integrate, and synchronize many disparate initiatives while preserving critical missions, cultures, and identities of individual organizations. Therefore, integration, synchronization, and communication become the foundations to our national preparedness efforts.

### **Building a National Preparedness System**

One of the key roles of the Preparedness Directorate is building our *national preparedness system*, which allow us to better answer the question, “What risks should we prepare for and how well must we prepare?” Given the range of roles and responsibilities of DHS, we must ensure that homeland security capabilities are internally coherent and collectively competent, and are organized within a fully integrated and adaptable *national preparedness system*.

A fully integrated *national preparedness system* will result in:

- Strategic and operational flexibility that accommodates risk and uncertainty;
- A capabilities-based framework that organizes the nation to act in concert, and with the speed and operational effectiveness required for effective prevention and response; and
- The means to measure readiness by an individual entity or in the aggregate.

This national preparedness system will improve the nation's homeland security and fully leverage the domestic all-hazards emergency response system for natural hazards and other emergencies.

State, local, tribal and private sector partners are not an adjunct to the development of a *national preparedness system*. Instead, they are integral to the development of a functional and successful system—bringing partnership commitment and participation to sustain and achieve sufficient preparedness capacity to ensure the Nation can effectively deal with catastrophic events. The nation depends on the resources of state, local and tribal governments, as well as the capacity of our nongovernmental and private sector partners to provide the majority of homeland security capabilities.

Some of the critical initiatives supporting this system are:

- Finalizing national and regional risk assessment methodologies to identify the types and magnitudes of risks we face;

- Encouraging capability-based planning that supports synchronization both vertically (across levels of government) and horizontally (across agencies at each level of government);
- Providing risk-based allocation of Federal assistance to state and local governments and other funding recipients and targeted towards building adaptable and interchangeable target capabilities, including capabilities that strengthen citizen resilience;
- Finalizing a system of preparedness measures to assess national, regional, and local preparedness.

Several of these initiatives are well underway in DHS and other Federal agencies. The Preparedness Directorate serves as the architect for this “system of systems” approach to fully integrated national preparedness.

### **Nationwide Plan Review**

Following Hurricane Katrina, the President directed DHS to conduct an immediate review of emergency plans for the nation’s major cities. Congress subsequently tasked DHS and the Department of Transportation (DOT) to review plans for all States and territories and 75 of the nation’s largest urban areas, with particular emphasis on evacuation planning.

The *Nationwide Plan Review*, the most comprehensive assessment of catastrophic planning yet undertaken in this country, was designed and conducted by the Department

of Homeland Security in conjunction with all fifty six U.S. States and Territories and seventy five of the nation's largest urban areas. The assessment consisted of two phases and was conducted in just over six months.

The two-phase methodology consisted of a self-assessment by States and urban areas of their own emergency operation plans, followed by an expert peer review. Both phases focused on whether emergency operations plans were sufficient for managing a catastrophic event. The Phase 1 Report, issued February 10, 2006, was compiled using self-assessment data received from States and urban areas. For Phase 2, Peer Review Teams comprised of 77 former State and local homeland security and emergency management officials visited every State and 75 urban areas to review and validate the self-assessments. In total, the Phase 2 teams spoke with 1,086 public safety and homeland security officials and reviewed 2,757 emergency operations plans and related documents. The Phase 2 Report reflects findings from both phases of the Nationwide Plan Review.

Planners and emergency management officials at all levels of government are working to strengthen plans and formalize mutual aid agreements. Existing plans and capabilities serve the nation well for the events most commonly experienced in the United States. However, the review found that disaster planning for catastrophic events in the United States suffers from outmoded planning processes, products, and tools. Plans are not coordinated in a systematic fashion, and are not expansible for the scope of catastrophic events that could potentially occur. The Review outlines 15 initial conclusions for States

and urban areas and 24 for the Federal government. Most focus on the need to make specific improvements in plans and to modernize national planning efforts.

The conclusions for States and urban areas include the need for coordination of planning across jurisdictions and levels of government; improved evacuation planning; concerted attention to special needs populations; planning for continuity of operations and continuity of government; assuring a robust and resilient command structure; enhanced patient tracking; improved resource management; and strengthened operational and public communications.

The conclusions for the Federal government focus on providing the tools to build a shared national homeland security planning system; strengthening collaboration and coordination; improving emergency communications; creating incentives for planning and planning excellence; strengthening regional planning capabilities; and fully implementing capabilities based planning.

While the results were mixed, the report acknowledges that many States and urban areas have initiatives well underway that are on the right trajectory, and are already modernizing and strengthening existing catastrophic plans. Completing the Review allowed us to establish the first ever baseline of the status of the nation's plans. DHS is working with States and urban areas to improve plans, support training and exercise initiatives, and engage in discussions on how to meet the catastrophic planning challenges identified in the final Report. Our family of plans reflect our commitment to

operational readiness. Plans are the *centers of gravity* that guide and unite national efforts in response to catastrophic disasters. Planning modernization is a priority for the Department.

### **The National Preparedness Task Force**

To build the National Preparedness System and respond to the recommendations of the Nationwide Plan Review, the Preparedness Directorate has established a new National Preparedness Task Force, for which I serve as the Executive Director. The Task Force will bring together DHS preparedness policy, planning, exercise, evaluation, and field management assets to create comprehensive solutions to the preparedness challenges I have outlined.

As an *enabling element* of the Preparedness Directorate, the Task Force will oversee integrated national preparedness efforts to ensure coordinated strategic partnering and development of standard preparedness doctrine. The Task Force is not operational. Preparedness policy, doctrine, planning, exercises and expertise are critical enablers for our operational components and our intergovernmental, nongovernmental, and private sector partners. This reflects the vision outlined in HSPD-8. The Department requires a lead preparedness integrator to support national preparedness transformation. This function will be accomplished within the Preparedness Directorate to promote synchronization and integration of national preparedness initiatives and requirements. The Task Force will link requirements with emerging technology, doctrine, and operational requirements, techniques, and procedures to ensure the integration,

interoperability, and operational effectiveness of the nation's homeland security capabilities.

The President and Congress have consistently identified the need for specific and measurable goals for preparedness, continuous national collaboration, application of assistance where the need is greatest, determination of essential capabilities that communities need, and advanced planning processes that ensure plans are adequate and feasible and achieve required synchronization. HSPD-8, Hurricane Katrina, and the strategic requirements of the war on terrorism have demonstrated the need for transformation in how we achieve national preparedness. The Task Force is empowered to drive transformation by enhancing homeland security preparedness through new combinations of concepts, capabilities, people, and organization that exploit the nation's advantages and protect against our vulnerabilities by building and sustaining national resilience.

### **Preparedness relationship with FEMA**

As Secretary Chertoff has stated, DHS must operate as an all hazards, fully integrated organization. He said this when he announced our Second Stage Review one month prior to Katrina, and our experiences since then have only reinforced our belief in this approach. The Department's executive agent – the Federal Emergency Management Agency – and states and communities across the country must be prepared to respond to and recover from all disasters, whether caused by nature or terrorism. While FEMA and

its partners are engaged in response and recovery, which can often be of protracted duration, the Preparedness Directorate ensures that there is no disruption to preparedness programs, activities and services to the balance of the nation.

The need for undivided attention to preparedness is especially acute given the characteristics of the homeland security community. The homeland security mission is *exceptionally interdependent and interrelated*, yet the community is decentralized, with rigidly divided responsibilities, distinct interests and cultures and a highly diversified administrative apparatus. Given these factors, preparedness requires unwavering focus and attention.

The nation's homeland security operational tempo moves through a series of "crests and troughs." This is best illustrated by the cycle of activity associated with preparations for hurricane season. We concentrate preparedness activities to ensure readiness for an upcoming season (the "crest"), and then reconstitute our capabilities when and if operational tempo allows (the "trough"). In the past, the nation has tried to "time" hyper-readiness with "crests" and conduct preparedness activities when and if the operational tempo provides relief. Our operational tempo has intensified due to natural cycles of severe weather activity, and because we are engaged in a global war on terror. Trying to prepare a nation in episodic bursts of activity that suffer frequent and protracted interruptions is difficult and ultimately unsustainable. This is why the Department has established a Directorate that commits its undivided attention and a dedicated focus to the nation's preparedness and operational readiness.



By focusing FEMA on its core competencies of response and recovery, and a new Directorate on preparedness and operational readiness, the Secretary acknowledged the critical nature of both missions to the nation's homeland security. We have not taken FEMA out of the preparedness business, nor have we taken preparedness out of FEMA. We have created a centralized engine for coordinating the multitude of preparedness activities within DHS as well as across federal, state, and local departments and agencies. Our department's operating components, such as FEMA and the Coast Guard will continue to perform their agency-specific preparedness activities to ensure operational preparedness.

In addition to working closely with DHS' other operating components and its response and recovery partners across all levels of government, FEMA is intricately linked with the Preparedness Directorate. The Preparedness Directorate handles grants, training, exercises, infrastructure protection, and medical preparedness, among other key activities. Consolidating these programs and activities in a single Directorate is yielding considerable synergy which benefits FEMA as part of a single, all-hazards department.

## **Close**

In closing, Mr. Chairman, the President and Congress have consistently identified the

need for specific and measurable goals for preparedness, national cooperation, application of assistance where the need is greatest, determination of essential capabilities that communities need, and advanced planning processes that ensure plans are adequate and feasible and achieve required synchronization. HSPD-8 “National Preparedness,” Hurricane Katrina lessons learned, and the strategic requirements of the war on terrorism all support transformation of our national preparedness. We must change our practices and doctrine to reflect our 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges, to exploit the Nation’s strengths and protect against our vulnerabilities by building and sustaining national resilience.

This nation has successfully faced comparably daunting challenges throughout its history. The men and women of the Department of Homeland Security and their counterparts across government and in nongovernmental organizations and the private sector are acting to correct systemic infirmities in our preparedness and the specific shortcomings that were revealed in preparations for and the emergency response to Hurricane Katrina. Our undivided attention to the nation’s preparedness gives us a set of ‘new eyes’ to look at the people, processes, products and technology that comprise this increasingly sophisticated and effective homeland security enterprise.

Thank you once again for providing me the opportunity to speak with you today and for your continued support to the Department.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have.